

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An interconnect structure comprising:
a substrate;
a conductive contact pad having a first elastic modulus, disposed over a portion of the substrate surface, ~~of the substrate~~ having an inner portion and an outer portion surrounding the inner portion;
~~the inner portion of the contact pad having a compliant layer~~ having a second elastic modulus lower than the first elastic modulus, disposed directly under the inner portion of the contact pad but not under the outer portion of the contact pad not including a compliant layer;
the portion of the contact pad over the compliant layer having a thickness thinner than the thickness of the outer portion of the contact pad; and
an insulative mask disposed over the contact pad, ~~the insulative mask~~ including an opening that ~~[[is aligned over and that]]~~ exposes ~~the inner portion~~, the inner portion of the contact pad ~~having sufficient flexibility to distribute mechanical stress applied to the contact pad~~.
2. (canceled)
3. (currently amended) The interconnect structure of claim 2, in which the contact pad ~~[[comprising]]~~ comprises a conductive metal and the compliant layer ~~[[comprising]]~~ comprises ~~[[at least one of]] a metal, a non-metal, a ceramic, and a composite.~~
4. (currently amended) The interconnect structure of claim 1, in which the contact pad ~~[[comprising]]~~ comprises copper and the compliant layer ~~[[comprising]]~~ comprises a ~~[[compliant]]~~ material having an elastic modulus lower than the elastic modulus of copper.
5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The interconnect structure of claim 5, in which the compliant layer ~~comprising at least one of~~ has pores, apertures, and voids ~~to provide the compliant layer with a flexibility greater than the contact pad.~~
7. (canceled)
8. (currently amended) The interconnect structure of claim 1, in which the inner portion of the contact pad ~~[[being]]~~ is substantially more flexible than the outer portion.
9. (currently amended) The interconnect structure of claim 1, in which the opening ~~[[exposing]]~~ uncovers a substantially planar contact surface.
10. (previously presented) The interconnect structure of claim 1 further including a solder contact attached to the contact surface, the solder contact including a contact portion defined by the opening of the insulative mask.
11. (currently amended) The interconnect structure of claim 10, in which the thickness of the compliant layer is greater than the thickness of the outer portion of the contact pad. ~~the contact surface including at least one protrusion that extends within the opening from the contact surface, the protrusion being defined by the compliant layer.~~
- 12-27. (canceled)
28. (new) The interconnect structure of claim 2, in which the contact pad comprises a conductive metal and the compliant layer comprises a polymer.
29. (new) The interconnect structure of claim 2, in which the contact pad comprises a conductive metal and the compliant layer comprises a dielectric material.